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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

**INFORMATION REPORT**COUNTRY **USSR**SUBJECT **Signs of Resentment Among Caucasian Moslems**DATE DISTR. **5 APR 54**

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THIS IS **UNEVALUATED** INFORMATION

1. For the first time, Moslems in the Caucasus have appeared in public with black bands attached to the Soviet flags carried in a demonstration. The demonstrators were students at Zakatay. The black bands were signs of mourning for Moslems recently arrested in Dagestan.
2. A letter, "in the spirit of a prayer," has been composed, which some hundreds of young men and women have signed and sent to Moscow. It asks the Soviet authorities to put a stop to the persecution of innocent Moslem peasants, now carried on by soldiers and junior officers in this region.
3. The local Soviet authorities were taken somewhat by surprise. They had apparently permitted the demonstration. Then, seeing that a letter was being sent to Moscow, they warned their own superiors. The latter ordered the arrest of the demonstrators. They were, accordingly, arrested, but, a few hours later, the Kremlin itself ordered the immediate release of the arrested students, without further action.
4. This affair started on 24 Dec 54. Up to 4 Jan 54, there had been no further move other than those described above, either by the Soviet Government or by the Communist Party. At the local Communist Party center, the arrest of the students was described as a precautionary measure. This sounds like a fairly obvious face-saving device.

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